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EXAMINER	
PRATT, HELEN F	

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
1761	

NOTIFICATION DATE	DELIVERY MODE
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**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

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<b>Office Action Summary</b>	Application No. 10/705,657	Applicant(s) THALER ET AL.	
	Examiner Helen F. Pratt	Art Unit 1761	

**-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --**

**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 29 August 2007.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**.                      2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-24 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-24 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All    b) ☐ Some \*    c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)                       | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)           |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)   | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____                                      |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____  | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                          |

## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112***

Claim 8 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claim 8 is indefinite in the use of "organic "before cane sugar and the other sweeteners. It is not known if the other sweeteners are to be organic or not. It is noted that the last 3 sweeteners are artificial sweeteners. .

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

Claims 1, 10, 12-18, 20-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lui et al. (6,982,101).

Art Unit: 1761

Lui discloses a peanut butter spread as in claim 1 having added edible oil in the amounts of from 60-80% and oil in the amounts of 1-15%. The reference discloses the use of "at least one stabilizer in a total amount up to about 4wt %". "Up to" reads on zero.

Liu discloses a sweetened nut butter spread made by grinding nuts in the presence of oil at a temperature of from ambient to 165 F (abstract and col. 2, lines 50-70). Cooling is a given since peanut butter is not kept in a heated state. The palm oil is used in amounts from 1-15%, preferably 2-12% (col. 3, lines 5-10, 20-25). A nut paste is disclosed which contains at least 9-% peanuts (col. 2, lines 1-70). Claims 12, 15, and 21 differ from the reference in the use of organically grown peanuts and organic palm oil. Nothing new is seen in using organically grown peanuts as opposed to commercially grown peanuts, absent a showing of unexpected results in using peanuts which are grown without the use of chemical fertilizers. Claim 12 further requires that no free oil on the surface and storage for 60 days. However, as the composition has been shown, it seen that no oil is on the surface and the storage is as claimed. Therefore, it would have been obvious to use known organically grown peanuts and to make a product is has no free oil on the surface of the peanut butter for 60 days.

Nothing new is seen in adding the oil during the grinding step into the mill, as in claim 13 as this has to have been done in order for the peanuts to have been ground (abstract). Therefore, it would have been obvious to dispense oil into the apparatus which as grinding the peanuts.

Claims 14 and 15 further require preheating the oil before dispensing the oil into the mill at particular temperatures and claim 16 requires roasting the peanuts before grinding. The reference is silent as to heating the oil. However, nothing new is seen in heating the oil before adding it since the peanut paste and oil were maintained at a temperature above 133 F. absent a showing of unexpected results using the claimed temperatures. Certainly the nuts are roasted before grinding (col. 2, lines 41-50). Therefore, it would have been obvious to dispense oil into a mill at particular temperatures and to grind the nuts prior to roasting.

Lui discloses roasting nuts at from 270 to 370 as in claim 17 (col. 2, lines 41-50). Therefore, it would have been obvious to roast at known temperatures.

Removing the skins is disclosed in col. 2, lines 44-50 as in claim 18.

Nothing new is seen as in claim 20 of collecting and pumping the peanut mixture to a heat exchanger and filling station, which is routinely done in the art. Therefore, it would have been obvious to collect, and pump the mixture in order to put it into containers.

Adding salt and sweetener is disclosed in col. 5, lines 40-60, as in claims 22 and 23, and milling to within the claimed range is disclosed in Lui who uses from 10-20 mils, preferably 13 mils.

Claims 1-8, 10, 12-18, 20-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hinds.

Hinds et al. disclose as in claim 1 that it is known to make a composition containing ground peanuts stabilized with palm oil. Mixtures of palm oil in amounts of 2-

Art Unit: 1761

4% and ground peanuts were tested, so it is seen that 90% ground peanuts were used (page 817, col. 1, para. 1-3). The amount of fat in the peanut butter (PB) would have been less than 55% since the peanuts contain only 49%, (page 1, col. 1, para. 4, line 5). Claims 1 and 2 differ from the reference in the use of organically grown peanuts and in the amount of oil, and in whether there would be free oil on the surface of the peanut butter. However, no difference is seen in the use of organically grown peanuts and those grown with fertilizers at this time. Whether the peanuts are grown with organic fertilizers or chemicals, chemicals are also found in organic fertilizers as everything is made up of chemicals or chemical compounds. The reference discloses that in using amounts of 2-4% oil, no free oil is seen on the surface of the PB up to 29 C. (page 815, page 1, para. 1, under Results and Discussion and col. 2, top graph). The claim requires at least "about 5% oil. However, no patentable distinction is seen at this time between the use of 4% oil and 5% oil. Also, as it is well known that the amount of oil in a peanut butter product affects its taste, it would have been obvious to add a little more oil for its known function. Therefore, it would have been obvious to use more oil in a PB composition for its known function.

The melting point of palm oil is disclosed to be 36-40 C. as in claim 3 (page 816, col. 1, 2<sup>nd</sup> para.). No patentable distinction is seen in 4 degrees, as the melting point is influenced by the amount of saturated fat, which might vary from product to product. Therefore, it would have been obvious to use a palm oil with the claimed melting point.

Claim 4 further requires heating the palm oil before it is blended with the peanuts. However, this is a method limitation in a composition claim. Nothing is seen that the

palm oil is not at the melting point since it is referred to as an oil. Therefore, it would have been obvious to use the palm oil in the form of an oil as disclosed by the reference.

Claims 5, and 6 require particular amounts of salt and sweetener from zero amounts up. The reference used 4.71% sugar and .79% salt (page 817, col. 2, para. 1.).

Claim 7 further requires unrefined organic cane sugar, and claim 8 requires particular types of well-known sweeteners. No patentable distinction is seen in the use of well-known sweeteners or in the use of organic sweeteners. Of course, aspartame, saccharine and cyclamate, are not organic sweeteners as they are man made.

Claim 8 further requires the use of the germ of the peanut. Nothing is seen that the germ has been removed from the peanut as in Hinds et al. It is well known that the germ can be used or not used.

Claim 10 further requires Valencia peanuts and claim 11 a particular particle size. The reference uses Florunner seed (page 817, last. Para. ). It would have been within the skill of the ordinary worker to use particular types of peanuts, since the varieties used are well known as are their characteristics. The reference discloses that the mixture was finely ground (0.13 mm clearance between stones) (page 817, 1<sup>st</sup> para.). It is not seen that this is different than that claimed at this time. Nothing is seen that oil would have been seen on the surface of the peanut butter after 60 days. Therefore, it would have been obvious to use known peanuts and to grind to a particular degree absent unexpected results.

Art Unit: 1761

Claim 12 is to the method of grinding the peanuts in a mill and claim 13 that the oil is dispensed into the throat of the mill. The further limitations have been disclosed above and are obvious for those reasons. Hinds et al. disclose grinding peanuts in a vertical mill and adding the other ingredients (page 817, para. 1.). Nothing new is seen in adding oil at the most convenient place in the apparatus. Therefore, it would have been obvious to grind as disclosed.

Claims 14 and 15 further require preheating the oil before dispensing the oil into the mill at particular temperatures and claim 16 requires roasting the peanuts before grinding. The reference is silent as to heating the oil. However, nothing new is seen in heating the oil before adding it since the peanut paste and oil were maintained at a temperature above 133 F. absent a showing of unexpected results using the claimed temperatures. Certainly the nuts are roasted before grinding (col. 2, lines 41-50). Therefore, it would have been obvious to dispense oil into a mill at particular temperatures and to grind the nuts prior to roasting.

Roasting peanuts is well known as in claim 17, and it would have been obvious to roast at known temperatures to achieve a desired flavor.

The peanuts are blanched as in claim 18 (page 817, para. 1).

Nothing new is seen as in claim 20 of collecting and pumping the peanut mixture to a heat exchanger and filling station, which is routinely done in the art. Therefore, it would have been obvious to collect, and pump the mixture in order to put it into containers.



Art Unit: 1761

Nothing new is seen in using organic palm oil absent a showing of unexpected results attributed directly to the use of organic palm oil as in claim 21.

Adding salt and sweetener is disclosed as above as in claims 22 and 23

Claim 24 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hinds et al. as applied to the above claims, and further in view of Lui et al. (6,982,101).

Claim 24 further requires milling the peanuts to from 10 to 15 microns. Lui discloses milling to within the claimed range uses from 10-20 mils, preferably 13 mils. (col. 2, lines 51-60). Therefore, it would have been obvious to mill peanuts as disclosed by Lui et al. in the process of Hinds et al.

Claims 9, 11, 19 and 24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the above combined references as applied to the above claims, and further in view of Krisinski et al. (4,143,176).

Krisinski et al. disclose that it is known to use particle sizes of from 8-20 microns as in claims 11 and 24 (col. 1, lines 58-70). Also, Krisinski et al. disclose that it was known to make a conventional peanut butter using normal skins and germ in the amounts of 50-60% as in claims 9 and 19 (col. 2, lines 22-41). Therefore, it would have been obvious to grind to a particle size as claimed as shown by Krisinski et al. in the process of the combined references and to add the germ to the composition.

#### ARGUMENTS

Applicant's arguments filed 8-29-07 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. The rejection over American Classic jar label is removed due to applicants' arguments.

Art Unit: 1761

Applicants argue as to Liu that Liu is to nut butter spreads and the method of making and states that peanut oil is the preferred oil for peanut butter. However, Applicants claim 1 requires no particular non-hydrogenated organic oil nor does claim 12. The use of organic palm oil is only required in claim 2 and 21. These claims are to "consisting essentially of organic palm oil". However, it is not seen that any other oil would affect the composition. In addition, the reference does use palm oil (col. 3, lines 8-9). Nothing has been shown that there is any patentable distinction between the use of organically grown peanuts and other peanuts. Applicants have submitted 4 jars of peanut butter, one being the applicants' organic American classic peanut butter and an affidavit by J. Rawleigh. It is noted that the PB of Rombauer contains 4 T. of safflower oil. Rombauer discloses that 1 and ½ T can be added, up to 2. That oil on the top could be the extra 1 T. Four T as disclosed in Rombauer is 12.5% of the composition. There is a small amount of oil separation on the top of the peanut butter with the Classic Label. There is a large amount of oil separation in the other samples. Even so, only adding from 5-7% oil to dry-roasted ground peanuts, one would have expected less oil separation, than if much more oil was added. Also, it is not clear what the processing conditions were which produced each sample. For instance, it is not known what the degree of dryness of the peanuts when the oil was added and the other processing characteristics. Applicants argue that the sweetening composition of Lui et al. contains a stabilizer. However, the claims do not exclude the use of a stabilizer.

Even if Liu is to a peanut spread, it does disclose that it is known to grind peanuts in the presence of an edible oil in amounts of from 1-15% and amounts within

Art Unit: 1761

the claimed amount (col. 20-25). Certainly, using more or less peanuts is within the skill of the ordinary worker as peanut butters and spreads are well known, and the spread generally uses a sweetening composition (col. 3, lines 35-40).

Applicants argue that the samples in the Rombauer recipe do separate.

However, no nexus has been shown as to the use of organic peanuts and regular peanuts. The non-separation of the peanut butter could be due to other factors, such as roasting time, amount of water in the peanuts, degree of homogenization, etc.

It is not seen that the reference to Krisinski teaches away from the limitations of claims 9, 11, 19 and 24. Rombauer is not used in the rejection at this time. However, it is enlightening to see the products made as in Rombauer. It is noted that the amounts of peanuts used are different than the American Classic as in the amount of oil so that it difficult to compare the two types of peanuts.

Krisinski teaches the use of the germ and skin and teaches particle sizes within the claimed range. It is not understood in what manner the references teaches away.


The method of making has been shown by Hinds et al. and Lui et al. The basic difference seems to be the use of organic ingredients. A showing using applicant's own method comparing organic ingredients and inorganic ingredients would be helpful.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Helen F. Pratt whose telephone number is 571-272-1404. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday to Friday from 9:30 to 6:00.

Art Unit: 1761

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Mr. Milton Cano, can be reached on 571-272-1398. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). Hp 9-7-07

  
HELEN PRATT  
PRIMARY EXAMINER